

In The Matter Of:

W.K., et al v.

Red Roof Inns, et al

PL Sum. J.

Ex. 029

Michele Sarkisian

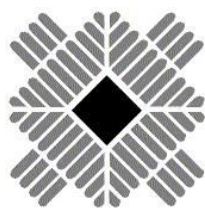
October 20, 2021

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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
ATLANTA DIVISION

JANE DOE 1, JANE DOE 2,
JANE DOE 3, and JANE DOE
4,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

WESTMONT HOSPITALITY
GROUP, INC., RED ROOF
INNS, INC., FMW RRI NC,
LLC, RED ROOF FRANCHISING,
LLC, RRI WEST MANAGEMENT,
LLC, VARAHI HOTEL, LLC,

Defendants.

CIVIL ACTION FILE

NO.: 1:21-cv-04278-WMR

E.F.

Plaintiff,

vs.

RED ROOF INNS, INC., RED
ROOF FRANCHISING, LLC, HJA
ENTERPRISES, INC., SAI
NATIONAL HOSPITALITY
VENTURES, LLC,

Defendants.

CIVIL ACTION FILE

NO.: 1:20-cv-04373-SDG

CONTAINS CONFIDENTIAL PORTION

VIDEOTAPED DEPOSITION OF MICHELE SARKISIAN

October 20, 2021

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3 Videotaped deposition of MICHELE
4 SARKISIAN, taken on behalf of the
5 Plaintiffs, pursuant to the stipulations
6 contained herein, reading and signing of
7 the deposition being reserved, in
8 accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil
9 Procedure, before Charna S. Perloe,
10 Certified Court Reporter, at 1201 West
11 Peachtree Street, Suite 3900, Atlanta,
12 Georgia, on October 20, 2021, commencing
13 at 1:09 p.m.
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1 APPEARANCES:

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3 On behalf of Plaintiffs W.K., E.H., M.M., R.P., M.B.,
4 D.P., A.F., C.A., R.K., K.P., and T.H.; Plaintiff J.A.;
5 Plaintiffs Jane Doe 1, Jane Doe 2, Jane Doe 3, Jane Doe
6 4; and Plaintiff E.F.:

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21 Doe 1, Jane Doe 2, Jane Doe 3, Jane Doe 4:

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9 On behalf of Defendants Red Roof Inns, Inc.,
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9 Videographer:

10 Doneilea Williams

11 Also Present:

12 Kristina Iakounina (via videoconference)
13 Samantha Girschick (via videoconference)
14 Beth Richardson (via videoconference)
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1 just like your grandkids and look just like your kids.
2 It's pretty hard not to -- for your heart not to break
3 over what you know is going on.

4 And hospitality ties because it's the primary
5 venue where trafficking takes place. So through my
6 relationship in hospitality, I learned of ECPAT and
7 asked to go through their training, and Carol Smolenski
8 asked me if I wanted to be on their board because I was
9 so well connected in the industry with the C-level
10 leaders. And at the time, early days, there was only
11 one major brand that had signed The Code.

12 Am I telling you too much?

13 Q No. That's fine.

14 A Okay -- one major brand that signed The Code,
15 and that was Carlson Rezidor Hotels with Marilyn
16 Carlson Nelson. And I was so fascinated with her as
17 the senior female leader in the industry, number one,
18 and being such a bold leader about trafficking, and
19 even though her board said they didn't recommend
20 getting that involved in that because of the franchise
21 relationships, she said, "I'm doing it anyway."

22 And then everybody else fell into line.
23 Hilton and Wyndham and, you know, the other brands fell
24 into line, signed The Code and got involved.

25 So that's probably more than you asked. But, 19

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1 that's going on in their hotels because it's a complex
2 industry.

3 So I didn't want to go to the franchisee. I
4 didn't want to go, you know -- I wanted to go directly
5 to the top. And so I asked a friend of mine who was
6 the chairman of the board, I think, at the time of
7 American Hotel and Lodging Association, Jim Abramson --
8 I asked him, because he's a friend, did he know Andrew
9 Alexander at Red Roof. He said, "I do."

10 And I said, "Well, I have an issue I would
11 like to talk with him about. Would you mind connecting
12 me?" And he said, "Sure," because I didn't think
13 Andrew Alexander would take my call without a warm
14 introduction. So I asked for a warm introduction.

15 And so I got -- I had no problem getting to
16 him. And I called him, and I shared with him what I
17 had seen on ATLtrafficking.com regarding trafficking
18 that was going on, Anthony Shivers, who is just an
19 incredibly well known trafficker, particularly in the
20 Southeast. So I told Mr. Alexander about that.

21 And so he took the information, didn't know
22 that it was going on and asked me where I got the
23 information, and I told him it really didn't matter;
24 now it's his; and, you know, please do something about
25 it. I told him I'm a brand fan. I told him that's why 24

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1 Did you ever get a call or a response back
2 from Red Roof, and, if so, who --

3 A Not from him.

4 Q Okay.

5 A It was from George Limbert.

6 Q Okay. So tell us about that.

7 A I think it was the 8th or so. It was just a
8 few days after I spoke with Andy that his CFO called,
9 and he asked -- his only interest appeared to be where
10 do I get the information.

11 Q Okay.

12 A So he asked about that. I wasn't going to
13 reveal anything more than ATLtrafficking.com. I mean,
14 he had everything.

15 Q Okay. And did you talk to him about it, or he
16 was just asking about the --

17 A He just asked where I got the information.

18 Q Okay.

19 (Reporter clarification.)

20 BY MR. MCDONOUGH:

21 Q Okay. I want to show you now what's marked as
22 Exhibit 7.

23 (Exhibit E-7 was marked.)

24 BY MR. MCDONOUGH:

25 Q If you can look at Exhibit 7, and it's got two 32

C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript was reported, as stated in the caption; that the witness was duly sworn and elected not to reserve signature in this matter; that the colloquies, questions and answers were reduced to typewriting under my direction; and that the foregoing pages 1 through page 94 represent a true, correct, and complete record of the evidence given.

I further certify that I am not disqualified for a relationship of interest under O.C.G.A. 9-11-28(c); that I am a Georgia Certified Court Reporter here as a representative of D'Amico & Associates, Inc.; that D'Amico & Associates was contacted by the party taking the deposition to provide court reporting services for this deposition; that I will not be taking this deposition under any contract that is prohibited by O.C.G.A. 15-14-37(a) and (b) or Article 7C of the Rules and Regulations of the Board; and by the attached disclosure forms I confirm that I/D'Amico & Associates is not a party to a contract prohibited by O.C.G.A. 15-14-37 or Article 7C of the Rules and Regulations of the Board.

The above certification is expressly withdrawn and denied upon the disassembly or photocopying of the foregoing transcript, unless said disassembly or photocopying is done under the auspices of D'Amico & Associates, Inc., and the signature and original seal is attached thereto.

This, the 3rd day of November, 2021.



CHARNA S. PERLOE
Certified Court Reporter A-457.